

FOREWORD

In 1938 Buell Quain spent four months, from August to November, 114 among the Trumai Indians of the upper Xingú River area of central Brazil. In December of 1938 he was recalled to Rio de Janeiro, and failing to obtain governmental permission for his return to the upper Xingú, at least under conditions allowing minimal possibilities for field research, he was unable to continue his studies among the Trumai. He went instead to do ethnographic and linguistic work among the Gê-speaking Kraho in the state of Maranhão. There, in April 1939, he died.

Quain's research among the Trumai was, therefore, interrupted and incomplete. He left it in the form of hand-written field notes and a diary. These were carefully and painstakingly arranged and typed by his mother, Dr. Fannie Dunn Quain. Several years after her son's death, Dr. Quain entrusted these notes to me with the understanding that if they proved to be of anthropological value, they would be prepared for publication or otherwise made available to scholars interested in the field. At one time I had hoped that another anthropologist might continue Quain's researches among the Trumai, and that his notes might thus be incorporated into a more complete investigation of this little-known society. But, in 1946, I was informed by Eduardo Galvão, who had visited the upper Xingú River area, that the number of Trumai had critically diminished and that Trumai life was so seriously disorganized that it was doubtful whether they could exist as a tribal entity. It was apparent that little, if any, ethnographic data on the Trumai beyond that contained in the scattered references of earlier anthropologists who had visited the region and the data in Buell Quain's notes would ever be available to us.

Robert F. Murphy therefore undertook to analyze, order, and prepare 28 for publication the data gathered by Buell Quain. His task was first 14 conceived as essentially that of an editor and a grant from the Buell 22 Quain Fund was made to him for this purpose. It soon became clear that ordering and editing were not enough. While the notes were rich in detail and insights, there were many gaps which Quain certainly was aware of, and there were interpretations and generalizations about Trumai culture which he undoubtedly would have inserted in his final report. Robert Murphy found that to understand Buell Quain's field work, he would have to immerse himself in the only available document-

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[127] ation — he would have to read and re-read the notes, learn the names of the numerous informants and other individuals mentioned there and in the diaries, identify them as to age, sex, status, family membership, etc., familiarize himself with place names and Trumai terms just as a field investigator would have to do. In addition, Murphy was able to utilize publications on the tribes of the upper Xingú region and of the tropical forest. He was able to consult with Dr. Eduardo Galvão who had worked in the upper Xingú area. And, after the first draft of this manuscript was completed, he was able to make many corrections on the basis of his own experiences among the tropical forest Mundurucú.

Throughout this account, Murphy has adhered to Quain's formulations as closely as possible, but to make them more comprehensible, he has carried analysis further and often added his own interpretations. And his knowledge of Quain's material authorized him to do so. Thus he gives us, not a complete monograph on the Trumai, but as systematic and intelligible a picture of Trumai culture and society as his limited data permitted. This monograph is presented for what it is — the field observations of a highly competent research anthropologist analyzed and interpreted by a capable and sympathetic fellow-anthropologist.

114 Something should be said about the general conditions of field research and about Buell Quain as an anthropologist. All anthropologists who knew Quain personally, and those who have read his *Fijian Village*,¹ are impressed by his skill as a field research worker and by his feeling for peoples and cultures not his own. Among the Trumai, as earlier in a Fijian community, he participated as fully as any outsider could in the culture under study. He was scientifically rigorous, verifying his observations and hypotheses again and again, and when possible giving verbatim statements.

But, above all, Buell Quain liked people, and everywhere he saw them as whole human beings. This was apparent in 1938 in his great concern for the Trumai canoe men who waited for him at an Indian post near the Xingú headwaters and who were forced to cross "enemy" territory on their return trip to their village. This was apparent in his field notes and diary and in his search to understand the complex motivations of his friends (and enemies). This was apparent in the reactions of the people themselves: in 1946 the few Trumai whom Eduardo Galvão encountered on the Xingú asked for "Capitão Quain" and spoke of him in glowing terms. And when Galvão camped with the remaining Trumai in 1952, young people who were but very small children in 1938 knew stories of "Capitão Quain" told them by their parents.

Buell Quain had an artist's responsiveness both to people and surroundings. I shall never forget his description of a phenomenon I later ex-

¹ Quain 1942.

123 himself to the hospitality of the Indians and in return received their confidence.

A feeling of aloneness permeates the Quain notes. He was in the midst of people with whom he had limited communication, due not only to the obstacle of language, but to the cultural gulf separating him from them. The threat of enemy attack was at that time constant in the upper Xingú area; life was precarious and civilization far off. Perhaps this existence sharpened his observations and increased the depth of his insights, for these are fine notes. Buell Quain's Trumai field trip is part of a tradition of ethnographic field research of which the anthropological profession may well be proud. His story, told more fully by Dr. Charles Wagley in the Foreword, adds one more legend to the saga of primitivist studies.

114 My own role in the writing of this monograph was to assemble and order the facts collected by Quain and to evaluate the data in terms of which behavior and attitudes are normative within Trumai culture, which lie within the range of permissible variation, and how such traits are merged in the whole. Facts do not speak for themselves. The concept of culture implies an interrelatedness of the components, which, in turn, calls for interpretation on the part of the ethnologist. It might be said that the information is Quain's product; its ordering into a coherent description of Trumai culture mine. It is impossible, however, to so neatly separate the Murphy from the Quain in this monograph, for Quain's interests and ideas have influenced my interpretation of the data. Conversely, the facts have no doubt been affected by the interpretation. For this reason, I have included as many illustrations and examples from the notes as was possible. I have also avoided generalizing statements in the actual description of Trumai culture, and overall interpretations have been reserved for the conclusion. The final chapter, then, is my own view of the dynamics involved in the breakdown of Trumai culture and society. The reader will by that time be in essential command of the data upon which the generalizations are based and free to make up his own mind.

128 Quain's most adequate information is on the closely interrelated subjects of personality, ethos, life cycle, and interpersonal behavior and attitudes. Material culture, technology, and religion are less thoroughly documented. Thus, the orientation of the monograph is the result of Quain's own interests. I have also visualized my task to be a description of the Trumai Indians in 1938, and reference has been made to other sources only to place them in the context of history and the cultural landscape of the upper Xingú River region.

114 Quain's field work was never completed and the reader will find large gaps in this monograph. Undoubtedly, there are errors and much that is in disagreement with other data and other field workers. It is

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101 and, in order not to do violence to the perfectly justified tribal
171 names, as actually happened in the case of the Nahuquá, we
197 may call them, where we need a comprehensive term, the
potter tribes, according to their most important ethnological
characteristic. Beside them stand the Yaulapiti as a closely
related Nu-Aruak tribe, but one already clearly different in
dialect and revealing other influences.

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101 Thus the arithmetical problem has been simplified to the
197 extent that we have before us Karaiben in the Bakaíri and
Nahuquá, Nu-Aruak in the potter tribes and the Yaulapiti, Tupí
in the Auetó and the Kamayurá, and, as an indivisible remainder,
the Trumai.

II. Anthropological.

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126 In order to have a record of the physical appearance of the
128 Kulisehu Indians, insofar as was possible during our brief acquaint-
141 ance with the individual tribes, a series of measurements were
taken, which did not turn out to be very numerous and are not
evenly distributed according to the different tribes or the two
sexes, yet nevertheless offer interesting material. Possible sources
of error on the part of the observer may be put down as constant,
since the measurements were all taken by Ehrenreich. He also
took a far greater number of photographs than could be reproduced
here; some of them, however, became very spotty and difficult
to reproduce.* He expects to make further use of the illustrative

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* As is shown in detail in the list of illustra-
tions, the following are reproduced here in
photographs: both sexes of the Bakaíri,
Mehinakú and Kamayurá, as well as only
men of the Nahuquá and Auetó, while
Yaulapiti and Trumai are missing altogether.

material and to deal with the collected material of the measure-
ments in detail and according to its comparative value for the

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128 other South American Indians; I shall limit myself here to a few
 141 preliminary studies and from the chief measurements give at
 least the bulk reduced to maximum, minimum, and arithmetical
 mean, in order to show merely in rough outlines the proportions
 of the Indian physique.

Virchow's instrumental equipment was used for the measure-
 ments: measuring staff with folding foot-board, calipers and
 beam compasses, as well as a steel /160/ tape measure. The
 measurements were entered on a printed Virchow form (cf.
Zeitschrift für Ethnologie XVII, p. 100). The following were
 measured: Bakaíri men 10, women 6; Nahuqua men 15, women
 12; Mehinakú men 6, women 5; Kustenaú women 1; Waurá
 men 1, women 1; Auetó men 14, women 2; Kamayurá men 14,
 women 4; Trumai men 8; a total of 68 men and 31 women. I
 shall always list the tribes in such a way that the arithmetical
 mean of the figures for the men increase from top to bottom.
Body height.

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	Men	Max.	Min.	Mean	Women	Max.	Min.	Mean
Trumai	8	163.0	155.0	159.1	-	-	-	-
Auetó	14	171.6	155.5	159.9	16	156.5	139.5	148.0
Kustenaú	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	150.0
Bakaíri	10	166.3	154.5	160.8	6	161.2	140.5	151.6
Nahuqua	14	166.7	155.5	162.3	12	161.0	145.0	152.2
Mehinakú	6	168.2	159.0	164.1	5	153.7	145.3	151.4
Kamayurá	14	172.0	159.0	164.1	4	155.7	152.0	153.8
Waurá	1	-	-	165.7	1	-	-	147.5

The arithmetical mean of the body heights of all these 67
 men, irrespective of tribe, amounts of 161.9.

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Without doubt, however, the number is too low. If we exclude
 all younger persons up to the estimated age of 25 and include the
 Nahuqua estimated at "50" years who represents the minimum of
 155.5, as well as the "60"-year-old Kamayurá with a minimum
 height of 159.0, we obtain the following rearrangement of tribes
 and alteration of figures. The maxima remain unaffected.